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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to develop an academic counseling and advising process that would improve the communication between other units of Grambling State University and the College of Basic and Special Studies (CBSS) in ways that would enhance student retention and satisfy students' academic needs. Five propositions on academic advising for student success were identified from the literature and research on academic advising and student retention: (1) advising should be designed to provide accurate, consistent, and accessible information for students concerning their progress within their curricula; (2) the best single indication of the likelihood of college persistence is the student's ability to cope with academic problems; (3) academic advising should be career focused; (4) the quality of student-faculty interaction is a major variable contributing to college holding power; and (5) the premier goal of educational advising is a full response to the student's needs. A committee of academic counselors used the information gained from the literature review to develop criteria for the advising process. Input also came from a formative committee of three CBSS counselors, four students, the directors of the computer, Academic Skills, and financial aid centers, and representatives from the eight degree-granting programs. It was recommended that the procedures selected by the committees be implemented into the University's advising and registration process as soon as possible. Further development and adjustment of the academic advising process was also recommended. Six appendixes contain supplemental information, including a list of improvement criteria. (Contains 24 references.) (SLD)

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IMPROVING AND DEVELOPING THE ACADEMIC ADVISING PROCESS AT GRAMBLING STATE UNIVERSITY TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Leadership

Hall R. Fields

Grambling State University

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A revised practicum report presented to Programs for Higher Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University

November, 1996

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Abstract of a revised practicum report presented to Nova Southeastern University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

IMPROVING AND DEVELOPING THE ACADEMIC ADVISING PROCESS AT GRAMBLING STATE UNIVERSITY TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC SUCCESS

by

Hall R. Fields

November 1996

The problem under investigation was that there was not adequate communication between the College of Basic and Special Studies (CBSS) and other units of Grambling State University for effective student advising. The purpose of this study was to develop an academic counseling and advising process that would improve the communication between other units and the CBSS to enhance student retention and to satisfy students' academic needs. The research question was "What specific components should be communicated to the freshman college in an academic advisory process at Grambling State University that would enhance students' retention and academic success?"

Drawing from the literature and research on academic advising and student retention, there were five propositions on academic advising for student success. They were (a) advisement should be designed to provide accurate, consistent, accessible information for students concerning their progress within their curricula; (b) the best

single indication of the likelihood of college persistence was the student's ability to cope with academic problems; (c) academic advising should be career focused; (d) the quality of student-faculty interaction is a major contributing variable to college holding power; and (e) the premier goal of educational advising is a full response to the student's needs.

A committee of academic counselors in the CBSS used the information gained from the review of literature to develop criteria for the advising process. Input was solicited from a formative committee consisting of (a) three counselors in the CBSS, (b) four students, (c) the director of the computer center, the Academic Skills Center, financial aid, and a representative from each of the eight degree granting programs. A summative committee was utilized for validation purposes.

It was recommended that the specific procedures selected by the committees be implemented into the University's advising and registration process as soon as possible. It was also recommended that the academic advisory process be developed and adjusted continually as students matriculated in the CBSS and transferred to their major college at Grambling State University. With the information gained from the pilot program, an academic advisory process should be implemented to include all academic units on campus.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

When incoming students encounter frustration with the registration process and have difficulty locating answers to their questions, the probability of dropping out is much greater. It is especially true when the problems involve academic counseling and advising. In order for the College of Basic and Special Studies (CBSS) to maintain a stable and productive enrollment, the development of a counseling and advising process was necessary.

In developing the process, there was an awareness of the larger purpose of advising for the freshmen students' articulation process. The larger purpose included developing a collaborative environment where students could contact many members of the University and college community for answers to questions that arose in academic planning (Frost, 1991).

Background

Grambling State University is one of America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The College of Basic and Special Studies is a part of the University's academic receiving structure for incoming students. It coordinates and organizes all academic advising of its students during the pre-registration and registration period and works in conjunction with the Academic Skills Center and other academic units that enroll the students in their general education core curricula subjects and developmental (remedial) courses designed to prepare them for success at the University. Counselors and advisors place students in their freshman level courses based on their American College Test (ACT) scores and their majors as listed in the college catalogue. The many components involved in advising students during registration made it a frightening

chore. Information and students were misplaced, students bypassed steps, and students were not monitored continuously. The academic counselors and advisors in the CBSS were prepared to counsel as well as advise students in their major curriculum course selection; however, there was not a procedure in place to control or communicate the problematic information.

The CBSS offered only one course, Freshmen Seminar (BSS 101). It was used for group counseling as well as for providing students with skills for successful matriculation into the college and for productive career planning. However, the counselors had the responsibility of placing students in subjects that were offered by other units as well. Counselors felt that they were the best qualified group on campus for this job. Nevertheless, there was not enough communication between other units and the CBSS to know exactly what academic requirements were needed for completion of the counseling and advising process. The situation created a problem when the students in this college entered the other units for classes or transferred to those units. Students searched for direction; however, in many cases they were given incorrect information or none at all. Consequently, their attrition rates were high. The college leadership team was charged with the responsibility of implementing the counseling and advising procedure to ensure successful completion of the advising and registration process.

A majority of the students entered the CBSS with low ACT scores and required remedial courses in English, mathematics, and reading. Since the courses did not lead to graduation, many students bypassed them, or they enrolled in them but did not attend classes. Students believed that they were taking the courses for "nothing"; therefore, they tried to evade them.

Advising students and getting them started on the right path to success in college were exciting and challenging goals. Excellent orientation programs, advising sessions and special support services, including financial aid, were implemented toward that end. Noel and Levitz (1993) suggested that the success of any advising effort depends primarily on its advisors and their commitment to the development of mature and self-directed students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to develop an academic counseling and advising process that would improve the communication between other units and the CBSS to enhance student retention and to satisfy students' academic needs. The outcome of the advising process was intended to improve retention and enable freshmen, transfer, and undecided students to successfully complete the registration process, as well as maintain the University's enrollment.

Significance to the Institution

Efficiency, accountability, productivity, advocacy, credibility, and consistency were all cited as advantages to the institution (Levin & Wyckoff, 1995). The existence of a university college counseling and advising process enabled the deans of the degree colleges to focus more on faculty, research, and graduate programs, knowing that the undergraduate needs were being attended to by a colleague. It gave the institution a spokesperson for the freshman and undergraduate student; it raised the status of their concerns and reassured parents. Research (p. 18) showed that having this process in place improved retention and graduation rates and also served as a recruiting tool for the institution.

The need for college and university counseling and advising centers to deal with important national trends was well documented. Levy (1990) indicated that senior administrators may not always understand the needs of counseling and advising centers because they were not always kept informed about the changes that were occurring in the work of counseling centers.

The importance of collecting evaluation data in counseling centers for planning purposes has been strongly endorsed. It has also been noted that some counseling and advising centers had resisted such notions. However, in view of material gained for this development process, "it seems unnecessarily risky to have upper-level administrators unaware of the challenges, needs, and potential value of counseling and advising units for helping students attain success" (Bishop, 1995, p. 33).

Relationship to the Seminar

One of the future trends affecting higher education, as studied in the Leadership Seminar, was that the university should stress developing the whole student. Therefore, this practicum focused on developing a process that would develop the whole student by having the student receive effective counseling from the faculty and advisors on decisions about academic programs and careers (Cetron, 1988).

Research Question

"What specific components should be communicated to the freshman college in an academic advisory process at Grambling State University that would enhance students' retention and academic success?"

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this practicum, the following terms need clarification.

Academic adjustment. The academic abilities, motivational factors, and institutional commitment that influence college attrition and graduation.

Computer-Assisted Advisement. A computer program that stores and matches degree requirements and monitors students' academic records and progress reports. The progress reports usually include the following: graduation requirements, specific courses to satisfy the requirements (waivers or substitutions), additional credits for students (advanced placement, College Level Examination and Placement Test (CLEPT)), a statement of proficiency in completing requirements, and directives for additional assistance.

Transfer. (1) Students entering the College of Basic and Special Studies with less than 30 hours from other institutions. (2) Students who have completed 24 hours of general education courses and are transferring to their major unit.

Transition. The period in which college students adjust from being a high school student to that of being a college student.

University College. Generically and interchangeably "freshman units." A central location for advising and monitoring first-year students, undecided students, and transfer students.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Evolvement of Model Academic Advising Programs

A theoretical model of advising program development was critiqued in a national survey of advising professionals. The survey was designed to test the hypothesis that programs progress in four stages: (a) Increasing Access, (b) Upgrading Services, (c) Coordinating Programs, and (d) Enabling Advisors (Frank, 1993). This process of program development was called a Four-Stage Model of Academic Advising Program Development. Respondents confirmed that similarities were in the kinds of stimuli that shape a program, along with predictable kinds of outcomes. Ways that the model could be adjusted so that it could better describe the sequence and types of changes that a program undergoes were also revealed. The initial survey suggested a common path of advising program development; however, many exceptions to the route charted by the model were evident. More research was needed to learn the characteristics of programs that do and do not evolve following the model.

Frank (p. 12) designed and conducted another survey to prove the conceptualization of the advising program development . The objective was to decide how closely the Four-Stage Model reflected the components and pattern of changes in evolving advising programs. If the Four-Stage Model did not adequately portray the dynamics of program development, the survey outcomes would provide direction for refining the model. The goal was to create a model that places the process of development in a simple conceptual framework that functions as a practical guide for improving academic advising programs.

It was theorized that because programs develop and evolve according to a pattern, administrators could develop their programs easier by guiding them through predictable sequences when making changes. However, the literature showed that there were no proposed subsequent models of advising program development available (pp 70-72). By studying this and other programs, administrators would gain a facsimile as a guide for further development in the CBSS.

Academic Advising and Student Retention

Five propositions on academic advising for student success were drawn from the literature and research on academic advising and student retention. They were (a) advisement should be designed to provide accurate, consistent, accessible information for students concerning their progress within their curricula; (b) the best single indication of the likelihood of college persistence is the student's ability to cope with academic problems; (c) academic advising should be career focused; (d) the quality of student-faculty interaction is a major contributing variable to college holding power; and (e) the premier goal of academic advising is a full response to the student's needs (Santa Rita, 1994).

The review of literature also suggests that greater involvement in campus activities, closer affiliation with faculty members, and on-campus employment are associated with increased student retention. Allegheny Community College proposes the following intervention strategies: (1) establish a woman's center to provide support to non-traditional, female students; (2) conduct a first-year seminar to promote supportive relationships between students and student-faculty interaction; (3) create college-funded work-study for on-campus employment; (4) establish a faculty

development program; (5) create additional student organizations; and (6) establish a first-year orientation program.

Complex challenges in emotional, social, and academic adjustments mark the transition to college (Chickering, 1969; Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994). The broader idea of academic adjustment involves more than simply a student's scholarly potential. Motivation to learn, taking action to meet academic demands, a clear sense of purpose, and general satisfaction with the academic environment were also important components of academic adjustment (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Baker & Siryk, 1984).

Despite the recognized excellence of American higher education, recent critics have been severe. Among other failings, inattentiveness to undergraduates has been one persistent criticism within and outside the academy. As attrition continues, the dropout rate remains high. Increasingly diverse students with new needs enter college. Competition between institutions for students grows tougher, barriers to upper-division majors proliferate, concern for the quality of students and of programs surface. Many institutions reexamine how they serve their new students. Public research universities are particularly sensitive to charges that they have been heedless in their concern for undergraduates, particularly freshmen (Strommer, 1993). However, one way to highlight commitment to freshmen is to create a unit with designated responsibility for them.

Recent works on higher education, on general education, and on student involvement sound the same themes. Universities need to focus on freshmen, to improve advising, to involve students in their learning, and to foster relationships with a faculty. Today, new students are receiving more attention toward their intellectual and

personal development. They are exposed to quality advising and better orientation to college life through specially designed freshmen seminars and related programs.

As the student population continues to diversify, every campus finds itself with more people than it designed the original system to fit. Only 20% of the college student population continues to fit the traditional category, namely the full-time student (who is 18-22 years old) living in a residence hall. The overwhelming majority of students--80%--are nontraditional, a classification that has come to encompass many groups of people: students returning to school after years in the work force, working women, international students, first generation college attenders, students of color, gay and lesbian students, and disabled students (Byrd, 1995).

In Involving Colleges, authors Kuh, Schuh, Whitt, and associates (1991) stressed the priority given new students at colleges was recognizing and involving students in their own learning. "The assumption underlying this commitment," they explain, "is that, by devoting resources to new students, the college will enable them to be productive, academically successful, socially confident, and help them remove obstacles to attaining their learning and personal development goals." (p. 141)

Degree-granting colleges should ensure students' optimal performance and achievement. Most experts agree that the academic advising process has the following general objectives:

1. To offer students a basic program of general studies and the prerequisite course for advancement to the degree-granting colleges.

2. To make available to students academic services designed to promote the development of those skills and competencies that are prerequisite for success in collegiate studies.

3. To give students academic advisement and counseling services that will maximize retention and promote successfully achievement in college (Strommer, 1992, p. 14).

Also, there must be an awareness of the larger purpose of freshman advisement. It includes developing a collaborative environment where students can contact many members of the University and college community for answers to questions that arise in academic planning (Frost, 1991).

The academic advising process focuses on the social and academic transition of students into the college community and uses faculty advisors or the counseling center staff members as its foundation. The most critical activity is the student-advisor conference; for it is the springboard from which all other activities originate. There are several reasons that faculty-student contact is such a vital part of successful retention efforts. The main reason is that the faculty is often the visible representatives of an institution. Initial impressions of an institution seem significantly to influence students' opinions of the institution. The first impression students often receive is of the faculty and staff. They often see the performance and attitudes of a faculty as a reflection of the institution as a whole (Noel & Levitz, 1993).

Some educators believe that the counseling and advising profession, with focused leaders, can contribute and take the lead in creating supportive programs for the students on the college campus (Heppner & Johnston, 1994). A review of the literature concluded that advisement is the activity most positively correlated with

student transition and retention. When university administrators satisfied students with the advising process, they satisfied them with the institution. At its heart, advising is an ongoing relationship; it is a process involving much more than scheduling and signatures. Advisement should provide the students with a mentor, a person with whom they can communicate with a sense of confidence when they need help. As counselors and advisors work with students, they should keep in mind the students' interests, aspirations, anxieties and values, and their abilities and educational goals. They should advise the students to take an active role in selecting their course of action (Noel & Levitz, 1993). Counselors and advisors can also determine other specific recommendations for connecting students with the resources they need to be successful.

University College

A 1991-1992 survey project, supported by a National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) Research Grant, surveyed university colleges (and similar administrative structures) at 68 universities. The purpose of the survey was to (1) describe their roles and responsibilities accurately; (2) determine the changes that have taken place in these enrollment/advising units since the 1985 survey; (3) establish trends in the training and rewarding of advisors and in the delivery and monitoring of the advisement process in these administrative units and in other major areas of responsibility; and (4) explore related issues such as the effect of administrative affiliation with other counseling and advising organizations (Strommer, 1992).

The comparison between institutions with university colleges for freshmen and those without yielded five areas of statistically significant difference. At institutions with a freshman or university college, (1) students are more likely to find services centralized

with connections between and among orientations, advising, learning assistance, career services and the like; (2) special populations of students are more likely to find their specific needs addressed; and (3) students find services in more different forms, from specialized advising to workshops and courses. In colleges and university colleges, the advising center assumes a broader range of responsibilities and services and takes more steps to monitor advising quality. The data suggest that in key ways, having a university college makes a decided difference on academic transition and students' achievement. (p. 93)

Academically At-risk Freshmen

In 1989 the University of Idaho began a program aimed at academically at-risk freshmen in an effort to (a) improve academic advising, (b) increase retention, and (c) increase academic success. The approach to intervention with at-risk students was consistent with recommendations by Boyd, Magoon, and Leonard (1982), who conducted a campus wide survey of students and staff at the University of Maryland. In summary, the review showed a wealth of literature on low achievers but little on underachievers and overachievers (Simmons, Wallins, & George, 1995).

Levin and Wyckoff (1995) contend that the goal of academic advising is to help students to decide educational alternatives. Such decisions increase the likelihood of fitness between a student's personal characteristics and a chosen curricula. Informed decision congruence increases the probability that students will persist and be successful. Students are at-risk when educational decisions are incongruent. Risk increases when decisions are both incongruent and uninformed.

The Levin and Wyckoff (p. 17) findings reduced the potential for high-risk decisions by identifying variables that predict persistence and success as assessment

statements about students' congruence. These assessment statements are the solutions of the three logistic regression equations derived from their three models.

Most research and authors conclude that academic advising of necessity include schedule planning, appropriate choice of major, and an explanation of the curriculum requirements for that major. It will also involve teaching students the proper clerical functions to effect their favorable progress through the institution. It will touch on, but not primarily or exclusively, personal adjustment and career choice issues. Finally, good academic advising will teach the student how to find appropriate specialized services, such as financial aid, career development, and personal counseling, when these services are necessary (Wall, 1988).

As professional and faculty advisors attempt to prepare these students for successful matriculation, the jobs have expanded and the information needed has increased. For example, advisors need to understand the cultures students come from, changing job markets, and issues concerning housing. Byrd (1995) mentioned, also, that they must contemplate the impact of homelessness on an advisee.

These trends and the measures for college administrators are suggestions that will mean a tougher job for academic advisors. To be successful in their job of academic advising, advisors will need more training. Most colleges and universities do not provide systematic training in academic advising for the faculty. A second method of preparing and motivating advisors for the difficult days ahead is to develop instruments and procedures that allow easy, quick, and reliable assessment of advising effectiveness (p. 45).

Students are most likely to do well academically and make sound educational decisions when they clearly understand how interest, ability, and academic performance

fit within a chosen field of study. When nonpersonal external factors unduly influence educational plans, they increase the risk of inappropriate planning significantly. This situation exists with many students who choose a major based upon employment opportunities, monetary rewards, and status. For example, engineering students with such motives, especially when coupled with lack of ability and interest in mathematics and science and when compounded by misconceptions about the curriculum and the profession, are not likely to support persistence and success. The authors attribute much attrition to inappropriate educational planning (Levin & Wyckoff, 1995).

Integrated Model of Academic Advising Program Development

Using an academic advising model that would address individual students' interests, abilities, or appropriateness would help in developing a process for advising. It was evident that the Four-Stage Model was too structured and did not allow for the variability that exists in program development. The diversity of responses pointed toward the need for further revision of the model. Frank (1993) created an Integrated Model of Academic Advising Program Development to remedy the deficiencies of the Four-stage Model. It differed considerably from its predecessor. The four phases of development are interconnected and overlapping and thus are not numbered. Although the focus of development usually centered on one phase at a time, one or two components from another phase could be focused on simultaneously by overlapping segments of the model.

The Integrated Model of Academic Advising Program Development shows that development is not a linear but an integrated process. The model has four phases of development which are so interconnected and overlapping that they did not need to be

numbered separately. The four phases are distinguishable yet are interrelated. They are Enabling Advisors, Increasing Access, Upgrading Services, and Coordinating Programs. Each phase has its own needs' assessment as stimuli. This model allows for unlimited variations in focus and direction of development. It was noted that seeing the four phases as they implied sets of tasks from the data does not readily lend the model to rigorous testing for fit (p. 71).

Summary

Most literature reviewed concluded that an increase in retention and graduation rates resulted from the delivery of a comprehensive set of services in one unit. For instance, when students evaluated University services, they showed that belonging to a support network, instructions in effective study methods, and tutoring were the most important services for their success.

The Integrated Model may be used as an instructional aid to raise awareness among administrators within the university who are unfamiliar with the parameters of advising programs and the multifaceted potential of such programs. It emphasizes that program modification must adjust to a constantly changing student population and to the university. To be responsive, the model challenged advisors to consider innovative strategies.

In spite of its untested status, the Integrated Model has the potential to serve as a useful tool. It displays a way in which coordinators and administrators can improve existing advising programs. Moreover, the model provides an insight into the complex process of program development.

No single administrative model can meet or anticipate all the needs presented by the diverse students entering higher education today. The evidence strongly suggests

that centralizing or closely coordinating services for new students in a single college or division yields not only higher quality services but also better retention and greater student satisfaction as well. By communicating to a unit that can focus on freshman advising and retention issues, the university can focus its resources efficiently to help freshmen make a successful transition to the university.

Academic advising may be a means to address attrition through educational planning for individual students. However, the current state of academic advising does not address the specific characteristics of individual students. Therefore, information on individual students' characteristics is not available to advisors or is inadequate (Levin & Wyckoff, 1995). Consequently, advising focuses on course requirements and pays little attention to individual interest, ability, or appropriateness. The present approaches to academic advising overall are not student centered and are intuitive, unsystematic, and founded upon assumptions rather than empirical findings (p.20).

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Development Methodology

The purpose of this study was to develop an academic counseling and advising process that would improve the communication between other units and the CBSS to enhance student retention and to satisfy students's academic needs. The design and outcome of the process enabled freshmen, transfer, and undecided students to successfully complete the registration process, as well as maintain the University's enrollment.

Procedures

To evaluate the effectiveness of the academic advising process, former and current Freshman Seminar (BSS 101) students were asked to list their concerns; this information was collected for the dean of the CBSS and analyzed. Other personnel who were involved in the academic advising and registration process were also given the opportunity to cite their perceived problems, concerns, and suggestions. From this information, six procedures were used to complete this development practicum.

First, a review of literature was conducted. The review included information on academic advising and academic counseling for incoming freshmen, retention, academic adjustment, and university colleges.

Second, a list of criteria was established for the academic advising process. The criteria were based on the information gleaned from the literature reviewed. The president and three academic counselors reviewed the list to validate the criteria. The complete list of criteria (Appendix C) and the lists of valuators (Appendix A) are included in the appendixes of this practicum report.

Third, a committee of individuals was formed to discuss specific communication problems and requirements for the academic advising process. This formative committee consisted of three counselors from the CBSS staff, students from previous Freshman Seminar Classes (BSS 101), the director of the computer center, the director of financial aid, the director of the Academic Skill Center and representatives from the other degree granting programs. A complete listing of the participants on the formative committee and their positions were included in the Appendix A of this practicum report.

Fourth, the committee wrote a draft of the academic advising process. The draft included, mission goals, advising procedures, a flow chart, and other student resource units (Appendixes B, C, D, E, and F).

Fifth, the summative committee, for validation purposes, reviewed the draft, using the criteria previously established. This committee of experts consisted of the assistant vice president for Academic Affairs, an education professor, and the vice chancellor of Southern University (SUNO) in New Orleans, Louisiana. A complete listing of the participants on the summative committee is included in the appendix (Appendix A) of this practicum report.

Sixth, revision suggestions were made by the summative committee and incorporated into the final draft. The final draft of the academic advising process was submitted to the dean of the CBSS and to the president of Grambling State University. A copy (Appendix E) of the product is included in the appendix of this practicum report.

Assumptions

It was assumed that members of the committee and the students responded honestly. It was also assumed that the developed process would be used at Grambling State University in the CBSS.

Limitations

This academic advising process was designed specifically for the CBSS at Grambling State University. Therefore, it may not be applicable to other universities and colleges.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

A review of the literature concluded that advisement was the activity most positively correlated with student transition, retention and success. The literature further showed that when they satisfied students with the advising process, they satisfied them with the institution. The success of the advising effort depended primarily on its advisors and their commitment to the development of mature and self-directed students. At its heart, advising was an ongoing relationship; it was a process involving much more than scheduling and signatures. It was determined that advisement should provide the students with a mentor, a person with whom they can communicate with a sense of confidence when they need help. Counselors and advisors who were dedicated to the process and to the students were evidenced by students' satisfaction, success, and persistence. Therefore, as the counselors and advisors worked with students, they were asked to keep in mind students' interests, aspirations, anxieties and values, and students' abilities and educational goals. Students were advised to take an active role in selecting alternative courses of action (Noel & Levitz, 1993).

The results closely followed the procedures. First, using information gathered from the literature on students, advisors, counselors, different units, deans, and the computer center, it was concluded that a full response was needed to help the students. The academic advising and retention process resolved many specific social, academic, and transitional problems. Students were assisted with intervention suggestions and problem solving recommendations designed to connect them with the resources on campus that could serve their needs for success. It was then determined that a system for communicating the needs of students should be instituted so that the CBSS could

process the students' information during the counseling and advising process. All of this information was monitored and continuously applied toward the students and their records. These records were centrally located in the CBSS Records Center.

The committee then met with a list of perceived problems, identified problems, and ideas on what should take place to help students in the advisement and placement process. It was determined that the freshman classes should remain open throughout the registration period and that the CBSS should be the intake unit for all freshmen, transfer students, and students with undecided majors. The problems included advisement for nursing majors presently enrolled in the School of Nursing, even with ACT scores below 16. Also, a coordinated system was initiated with units such as student affairs, academic colleges and schools, the bookstore, the library, financial aid, and the student union so that their concerns were communicated to the CBSS.

Second, from the review of the literature and the group discussion, the criteria were established for the academic advising process. Evidence from the criteria (Appendix C) strongly suggested that centralizing or closely coordinating services for new (freshman) students in a single college (university college) or division yields not only higher quality services but often better retention and greater student satisfaction as well. The major issue was how to develop a process that would communicate concerns and actions of all units to the CBSS. Also, the orientation process for new students was reorganized and improved.

An evaluation meeting was conducted to assess whether the CBSS academic advisors and counselors addressed the factors hypothesized as contributing to the lack of communication between the CBSS and other units of the University. Individuals who were involved in the advising process in the CBSS and other units of the University

brought their concerns to the meeting for discussion and further action. Third, the assembled group became the formative committee. They brain stormed all facets of the University that affected students' academic involvement. This formative committee gathered information form deans, the registrar, department heads, Student Affairs, Financial Aid, Housing, and the University Bookstore.

The fourth procedure was the development of a written draft of the academic advising process (Appendix E). After students were admitted into the University following the procedures listed in the Grambling State University catalog, they began the academic advising process immediately in the CBSS. The incoming freshmen or transfer students admitted into the University had taken the ACT (or SAT) and had all their transcripts filed in Admissions or the Registrar's Office. If students had not been tested prior to coming to GSU, they were tested by the Testing Center in the CBSS (university college). Therefore, upon reaching the academic counselors and advisors, the students were advised and placed in classes according to their ACT scores and majors.

The fifth procedure was submitting the draft to the summative committee for review and validation as compared to the established criteria. The committee agreed that a procedure was needed and that the advisement process was effective. It was also noted that care should be given to each unit and its leader so that turf wars would not be involved.

Lastly, after many revisions were made from the summative committee's suggestions, the collective criteria and process were critiqued and placed in Appendixes C, D, and E. The summative committee suggested changes in class selection, advising, orientation, and retention.

The problem with class selection was that most freshman classes closed during the first few days of registration. Counselors and students spent from twenty (20) minutes to four (4) or more hours selecting twelve (12) hours from the limited availab'- classes to enroll full-time students. After the problem was assessed, it was concluded that freshman classes would remain opened. However, a few deans did not agree because they were short on faculty and space.

The counselors and advisors had problems with the previous computer-assisted adv'sing and placement system because the information provided did not necessarily reflect the students' current academic status. The process of adding, dropping, and finding alternatives to closed classes was discussed and reprogrammed by the computer center. However, many portions of a computer assisted academic advising and placement process were omitted. Counselors desired the installation of a computer assisted academic advising and placement system that would eliminate many of the advising problems faced during the previous process.

New students, freshmen and transfer students, needed a lot of assistance. Orientation was a major tool for getting information to students about testing, placement, academic majors, student organizations and activities, housing and food services, and financial aid. Also, during the Fall 96 Semester, community and civic resources were introduced in the orientation process.

The committee advised that a retention program should be designed to improve student retention and graduation rates. When students with low ACT scores were accepted into the program, they were entitled to tutoring, counseling, academic assistance, computer access, financial aid advice, and information on graduate and professional schools. Most importantly, the advising and retention program should

maximize students' learning potential. The monitoring methods suggested were tutoring programs in math and science courses, learning skills, and workshops geared to students' specific needs as gathered from assessments. The retention and tutoring services were to be carried out with a dedicated staff of students and professionals.

This completed report was then reviewed by persons on the formative committee and others for their ideas before being accepted. The information was then discussed with other academic leaders, the dean of the CBSS, and the president of Grambling State University.

The formative committee agreed that the process seemed feasible and would work at GSU when implemented. The result was that the University was taking the leadership role in academics and in faculty-student relations for the development and success of the "whole student." The process addressed the propositions drawn from the literature for academic advising, student retention, and student success. The propositions were (a) design the advisement process to provide accurate, consistent, accessible information on students concerning their progress within their curricula; (b) implement a systematic procedure to identify students having problems and systematically give them needed aid; (c) make academic advising career focused and congruent with students' needs; (d) train the advising and counseling staff to implement the established goals and objectives of the advising process. Implementation of the advisement process assured the students and the University that the administrators were in the proper leadership position for the Twenty-first Century. Efficient, accountable, productive and credible leaders were cited as advantages to Grambling State University.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

The process developed for this study followed criteria set forth by Chickering (1969), Frost (1991), and Santa Rita (1992) and current testing and implementation by Noel & Levitz, (1993). Beginning with Chickering, all of the authors agreed that the transition from high school to college was marked by complex challenges in emotional, social, and academic adjustments. Each author also concluded that the broader idea of academic adjustment involves more than simply a student's scholarly potential. More importantly, educators involved with students' care are factors in their success and in their graduation.

For effective retention, placement, and monitoring of students, there were three procedures discussed for implementation. First, the computer system was programmed for computer-assisted advising and placement so that it would automatically select courses and place students in the correct courses for their curriculum. Previously, counselors and students visually selected courses from the University's catalogue and keyboarded the course numbers into the computer. The other choice was to select the "ZAP Number" of the course from a computer printout and keyboard it into the computer. When the input process was completed, the advisor or counselor made a computer printout of the selections on the student's class schedule. Without these controls, the students tended to drop or add classes without going to their assigned counselors or advisors. Second, students who tested 15 or lower on the ACT were not allowed to bypass developmental classes or to enroll in general education and upper level (300-

400) classes. Third, advisors and counselors were trained to monitor students in all branches of their academic trail. Combining computer-assisted advisement and placement with advisor monitoring of students aided in ensuring students' success.

Freshman colleges thrive where the administration and faculty realize that colleges are not just course-giving institutions; effectiveness in education requires that a leader be open to a complex set of pedagogic means. Increasingly, commentators on higher education recognize advising as a critical academic link. In his award winning book Undergraduate Education: Goals and Means, Rudolph Weingartner (1992) observes "to be effective . . . to insure that the possible becomes actual, undergraduate institutions must provide a kind of paraeducation if students are to benefit fully from proffered education opportunities." (pp. 113-114). Although Weingartner notes that orientation and advising are the most important aspects of this paraeducation, he is not very helpful in suggesting how advising is to be done. A university college (freshman) must teach through advising, through tutoring, and through offering students many diverse experiences such as freshman seminars and orientation.

> We must establish a rapprochement, or, in some cases, a cease-fire between those who do advising for a living and those who do advising as part of a larger set of responsibilities. Somehow faculty members, counselors, advisors, and administrators must find ways to forge new alliances, abandoning both provincialism and turfism, so that the students will be best served (Habley, 1988, pp. 87-88; 1994, pp. 30).

Conclusions

Getting students started on the right path to success in college is an exciting and challenging goal. Excellent orientation programs, advising sessions and special support

services including financial aid are all means toward that end. The success of any advising effort depends primarily on its advisors and their commitment to the development of mature and self-directed students (Noel & Levitz, 1993).

Levy (1990, pp. 614-618) suggests that senior administrators may not always understand the needs of counseling and advising centers because they are not always kept informed about the changes that are occurring in the work of counseling and advising centers. The importance of collecting evaluation data in counseling centers for planning purposes has been strongly endorsed. The need and potential value of counseling and advising units for helping students attain success has been well documented (Bishop, 1995, p. 33).

The university leadership must establish a rapprochement between the counselors and advisors in the CBSS and those who advise and teach subject matter throughout the campus. Faculty members, counselors, advisors, and administrators must find ways to forge new alliances, abandoning both provincialism and turfism, so that students will be best served (Habley, 1988).

Implications

The Integrated Model of Advising Program Development can help administrators focus on one goal at a time as they seek to improve advising. Instead of taking a hit-or-miss approach to meeting institutional and student needs, which may be poorly defined, they can use a model. Administrators can extrapolate from the model a systematic approach to meeting those needs. Considerable latitude was offered in the direction of development because there was not a universal path for developing an academic advising program. The model emphasized that program modification must adjust to a

constantly changing student population and a changing institution. To be responsive, advisors were challenged to consider innovative strategies for change.

Although many authors noted that university colleges, caring individuals, and academic advising and counseling are very important and are critical academic links for students' success, they do not suggest how these links should be integrated at individual universities. Therefore, administrators and faculty must solve these problems for their own universities. These ideas are only suggestions; however, counseling and advising educators must be open to a complex set of pedagogic means for aiding their students to success. Nevertheless, to be effective advisors and academic counselors must use modern technology for advising students. They cannot manually handle the many complex social, academic, and monitoring requirements of the current enrollees.

The central implication gathered from this research is that colleges and universities should stress developing the whole student in their academic advising process as a future trend in higher education. This may be done by having students receive effective counseling and advising from their faculty and advisors on their decisions about academic programs and careers (Cetron, 1988).

Recommendations

Several recommendations for effective retention, placement, and monitoring of students were offered. These and other specific components would improve students' success and retention in the academic advising process for the university college (CBSS). They would, also, improve the University's enrollment stability.

It was recommended that an Integrated Model of an Academic Advising Program Development be created to remedy the deficiencies of the program that was in place. As a need surfaced and exerted pressure for change and before initiating actions,

administrators considered six factors in selecting appropriate response: (1) cost of implementation, (2) capabilities of current personnel and staffing constraints, (3) levels of administrative support for the proposed program, (4) technological resources, (5) the academic or student support services provided elsewhere on campus, and (5) the time frame for implementation.

It was recommended that all academic branches of the University that come in contact with incoming freshmen communicate their activities to the CBSS for proper coordination and implementation.

It was recommended that each academic unit identify and train a person to coordinate the registration and advising activities for its unit to better assist students in the academic advising process. However, the CBSS acquired all freshman advising activities because it was in a position to implement them using counselors and advisors that are in place permanently. Students were given the freedom to communicate with advisors, professionals, and deans in their major areas for personal development.

It was recommended that counselors and advisors be trained and evaluated in accordance with the mission of the Counseling and Advising Process that was in place.

It was recommended, therefore, that counselors and advisors monitor students in all branches of their academic trail. Also, they were to become the caretakers of the students until they had completed thirty (30) to fifty-nine (59) hours of general education courses. This allowed students to complete their basic classes and their developmental classes (if needed) during the intended semesters of admission, advising, and registration.

It was recommended that the students' completed schedules be signed by them and their counselors and filed in the CBSS Records Center. The document was needed when students added or dropped classes without their counselors' knowledge.

It was recommended that students complete registration and the financial aid process before classes begin. Heretofore, many students completed financial aid and registration weeks after classes had started; therefore, they were not able to meet class requirements. Not being able to complete financial aid and registration by a scheduled deadline caused the students to fail classes; to withdraw from classes, officially or unofficially; or to withdraw from the University during the semester. The high failure rate and withdrawal rate are detrimental to students and to the University.

It was recommended that freshman seminar classes be arranged so that both teaching and group counseling activities are performed in a systematic manner.

It was recommended that instructors be allowed to drop freshman students from their class rolls after five or more unexcused absentees. This would reduce the high failure rate as well as the financial aid default rate.

It was recommended that the academic advising process be continuously monitored and placed in the hands of a trained staff and a coordinator with the authority to communicate with all units outside of the CBSS and to make corrections and improvements as needed. Also, the counseling and advising unit should be provided with a person with the title of head or director. The counseling and advising unit's head or director should be specifically responsible for academic counseling in the CBSS and for coordinating the activities in the counseling and advising unit.

It was recommended that computer-assisted advisement and placement be combined with advisor monitoring of students to ensure their success in the university college (CBSS).

It was recommended that after a period of time, with systematic monitoring and improvement, an advisement handbook be developed for the academic advising and counseling process.

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Appendix A

List of Valuators

FORMATIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Counselors-advisors

Gardner N. Clark

Hall R. Fields

Clair Young

Students

Tonesia Rushing

Latosha Smith

James Sparks

Shenee Williamson

Tamaria Young

Theresa Watson

Others

SUMMATIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Prentiss Love, Education Leadership
Grambling State University

Patricia Harris, Vice Chancellor
Southern University
New Orleans, Louisiana

James Walker, Assistant Director
Computer Resource Center
Grambling State University

Appendix B

Advisor's Guide

Admission Requirements

High school diploma or GED
Official transcript from all colleges previously attended (transfer students)
ACT (or SAT converted to ACT) scores
21 and above - honors college (student's choice)
12-19 hours maximum enrolled per semester
3.0 GPA may take 21 hours with approval by the dean

16-20 ACT regular college by major (CBSS/University College)

15 and below - developmental subjects
14 - 15 Basic Math 098
0 - 13 Basic Math 097
15 - Basic Reading 095
0 - 15 Basic Reading 94
14 - 15 Basic English 093
0 - 13 Basic English 092
13 hours maximum enrolled per semester

ADVISING in the (University College)
College of Basic and Special Studies
Retention and Management System (NLCtr.)
College Student Inventory Recommendations
Before placing students, encourage them to follow CSI Recommendations.

Placement in curriculum by major (computer monitored)
24 hours Total General Education required courses
30 - 40 hours of Basic Subject Classes
BSS 101, HED 100, HUM 106

15 or lower	16 or higher on ACT scores
Developmental Subject	General Education Courses -- Regular College
Read 094/95	Math 131/147, English 101/102
Eng. 092/093, Math 097/098	Science: Biol. 103/104 Sc. 201/202
Follow curriculum in Catalogue.	Courses in Major Field

After completing 30-40 hours of General Education courses,
transfer students to major college.

Recommended that all of this information be computer activated with
the advisor or counselor making the final decision.

Appendix C

List of Criteria

1. Offer students a basic program of general studies and the prerequisite course (computer monitored to prevent student's attempted evasion) for advancement to the degree-granting colleges (Strommer, 1992).

2. Make informal educational alternative decisions that reflect congruency. Congruency increases the probability that students will persist and be successful. Students are at risk when educational decisions are incongruent. Risk increases when decisions are both incongruent and uninformed (Levin & Wycoff, 1995).

3. Establish trends for the training of advisors and the delivery, monitoring, and rewarding of advising in administrative units. Explore related issues such as the effect of administrative affiliation (Byrd, 1995).

4. Use career surveys and assessment instruments. Provide students with academic advisement and counseling services that will maximize retention and promote successful achievement in college (Strommer, 1992; Byrd, 1995).

5. The best single indication of the likelihood of college persistence is that advising should be career focused (Santa Rita, 1992). Use career assessment instruments to help reduce the potential of high-risk decision making by identifying variables that predict persistence and success.

6. Provide the students with a mentor, a person with whom they can communicate with a sense of confidence when they need help. Advisement is an ongoing relationship; it is a process involving much more than scheduling and signatures (Noel & Levitz, 1993).

7. Assist students in making informed decisions regarding educational alternatives (Levin & Wyckoff, 1995).

8. Focus on the social and academic integration of students into the college community and use faculty advisors and counseling center staff members as a foundation. Conduct a freshman seminar to promote supportive relationships among students and positive student-faculty interaction (Byrd, 1995).

9. Centralize or closely coordinate services for new students in a single college or division. Centralizing within a single college yields higher quality services, better retention, and greater student satisfaction (Strommer, 1992).

(Appendix C Cont.)

10. Develop a collaborative environment where students can contact many members of the university and college community for answers to questions on academic planning (Frost, 1991).

11. Provide workshops to facilitate the performance and attitudes of the faculty and advisors. The faculty and advisors are often seen as a reflection of the institution as a whole (Noel & Levitz, 1993).

12. Teach students how to locate specialized services, such as financial aid and career development when these services are necessary (Wall, 1988).

13. Encourage counselors and advisors to make a commitment to the success of the students they serve. The success of the advising effort depends primarily on its counselors and advisors and their commitment to the development of mature and self-directed students (Noel & Levitz, 1993).

14. Use a model and experts for the development of an academic advising program (Bishop, 1995; Frank, 1995; Noel & Levitz, 1993; Santa Rita, 1992; Strommer, 1994).

Appendix D

Counseling and Advising

Mission Statement and List of Perceived Problems

The academic advising process at Grambling State University focuses on the social, academic, and career integration of students into the college community. It uses faculty advisors or counseling center staff members as its foundation for helping students in the university college (CBSS) to succeed academically and to graduate from the University. The success of the advising effort depends primarily on its counselors and advisors and their commitment to the development of mature and self-directed students.

1. A structured university college program that will maximize retention and career choices and promote successful achievement must be implemented (Strommer, 1992).

2. Research shows that only 20 percent of the college student population continues to fit into the traditional category. Current trends must be considered for advising students (Byrd, 1995). Therefore, the University cannot enroll, teach, nor advise students using traditional procedures.

3. The students need a commitment from the University that will enable them to be productive, academically successful, and socially confident. Through an acquired sense of independence, students will be encouraged to remove obstacles that keep them from reaching their personal development goals (Kuh, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 1991).

4. Although GSU's student body is predominantly African-American, it does not use an African-American yardstick to decide what college life is about. Therefore, the University must remain competitive with other universities on local and national levels (Byrd, 1995; Levin & Wyckoff, 1995).

5. Trends and measurements for college administrators suggested that they must provide training for academic advisors to be successful (Byrd, 1995).

6. Students are at risk when decisions are both incongruent and uninformed (Levin & Wyckoff (1995). This problem is evident because many students are not attending their scheduled classes, their attrition rates are high, they attempt to evade developmental courses, and they have not made a commitment to their education.

7. Improvement must be made in the areas of financial aid, advising, and career counseling.

Appendix E

Draft of the Advising Procedure

for Freshman and Transfer Students

After being admitted, students with ACT scores of 16 to 20 will be placed in general education required courses. Students with ACT scores of 21 and above are placed in the Honor's College; or, if they choose, they will be placed in the regular freshman level college. However, students with 21 and above ACT scores are encouraged to enter the Honor's College to receive its academic benefits.

Students who have not been able to select a major or a career will be given career counseling, which involves the use of interest and skill survey instruments. This will maximize retention and promote students' successful achievement in college.

Students with ACT scores less than 16 are placed in developmental (remedial) courses in accordance with the University's policies and procedures. These students cannot bypass these classes or enroll in regular college classes until they have completed the developmental prerequisites. Therefore, students' selection of courses will be advisor and computer monitored throughout the semester. For registration, courses will be computer generated in the order of required prerequisites. When students enroll in courses and fail or withdraw, the computer will identify these courses for the advisor during registration so that the students can retake them. Advisors will be made aware that students will try to avoid taking developmental courses.

The classes will be selected by the students' advisors from a major curriculum that is listed in the University's catalogue. However, the advisors should discuss with the students their choice of selections before completing the advising process. After students have satisfactorily completed their developmental course work and general education required courses, they will be required to attend an advisor's conference to discuss the success of their academic careers. After which, students will officially transfer from the CBSS into their major colleges, which grant the degrees they are seeking.

Appendix F

Flow Chart

The Registration Process

at Grambling State University